Coaching the Youth Player

Posted by STLCoach - 14 Mar 2009 04:52

This thread I want to put some ideas I have been exposed to over the last few years about coaching the youth player.

1. As coaches, and adults, we must keep in mind that we are working with kids, kids who want to play soccer. I know this is obvious, but when faced with teaching, or coaching, the most obvious things can take a back seat to results.

Soccer is a game that has an objective.... score more goals than the other team. It is the coach who prepares his players to cope with all situations on the field without freaking out, that will be the most successful. So we coaches are there to teach our players how to cope with the stresses of the game(skills).
So lets start with the coach. Be prepared, patient, and reasonable.
gotta go coach ...so more about this later.

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Re:Coaching the Youth Player

Posted by STLCoach - 20 Mar 2009 08:28

Cont. When coaching players to cope better with the game of soccer, coaches are responsible to do thier part to keep a non threatening learning environment. Parents, players and coaches should do all they can not to add anxiety to the game. "Working the officials" is not part of the game.
Your players are not more competetive, or better, if they cannot deal with situations in the game that are stressful. Ie: good opponents, bad weather, bad field, crazed parents...you get the point. You should strive to want your players to come to matches and show thier skills in every game by not being overtaken by emotion from stress.
Ask yourself: What kind of coach am I? Are you the **chair coach** who never yells out onto the field during matches, or are you the **high strung coach** who has something to say every second of the game to the players on the pitch? You can be in the middle also. To be honest I have been all of them. Today coaching I am much more reserved during matches and training. I feel better coaching this way because the stress level I carry into matches is lower, and I find my players are more compfortable. to be continued...

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Re:Coaching the Youth Player

Posted by STLCoach - 22 Mar 2009 05:35

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part3: When you create and atmosphere free of stress, other than what soccer brings to the situation, you will find your players will learn faster. What do we want our player to do?
I want players to bring their skills to the game and use them. No amount of screaming or threatening them will do this. Praise will help and also using some Guided Discovery will help as well. GD is giving your players questions that will lead them to successfully answering your questions. IE; Sally the ball

came to you and you just kicked it up field. Did you have any other choices?
This technique takes patience, but you give the power back to the individual player and level the relationship between the two of you. Inviting more comfort and less stress. A much better learning environment.

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4 FLOW & FREEZE

Posted by STLCoach - 26 Mar 2009 04:28

Later this week I will layout the principles of successful learning and communication for coaches and players(& parents). For now though, the next time you have your players together, try this experiment. Bring a piece of paper to the training session, and have an assistant or someone you trust, take down 2 simple observations:
1. mark how much time your players ***are playing*** at a trainig session **and** how many minutes **they are not playing**
.
2. how many negative comments you make(including sarcasm) and how many constructive comments.
You absolutly want to keep the minutes the kids are playing very high. You will be suprised at the results. I find that coaching within the flow of the play can be more benificial than the FREEZE method of coaching.
Coaching in the flow: when the coach has a game or drill going and coaches without stopping the game or maybe only 1 player in th play, letting the majority of the group keep on.
FREEZE: when the coach spots a coachable moment and yells "Freeze" or "Stop!" to instantly stop the gmae and address the moment in the play, talks about another option the players can take, recreates it with the players then starts play again with the group using that moment.
I have been using the Freeze method less, but i still use it. Last night at training I used it during a drill of 4v2 to get accross the theme of the night(Moves in play) and also give a rest to a fatiguing group. It lasted 30-45 seconds and we moved on.
Also condsider giving fewer rest breaks and small in durations(30-45 seconds). Use your common sense here. ***If it is a heat alert outside make sure the kids get plenty of water.***
I find that most players while playing soccer need maybe 1 break in 45 minutes to an hour, (***again fitness only sessions demand more breaks)***
even my Under 10s.

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Coachable Moments

Posted by STLCoach - 29 Mar 2009 09:52

COACHABLE MOMENTS
The coachable moments occur throughout the workouts and matches. You do not have to stop on every moment. This is where your organization comes into play.
Have an idea for the session, write it out like a good story: begining, middle, ending.
Warmup, match related, and match condition.
Example topic: Dribbling for speed
Start with you dynamic warmup, incorporate some dribbling with it.
Match related: dribble with pressure of time and distance, then add a 1v1 situation to your work out.

Now is a great time to put in your fitness.
Coachable moments will be made throughout the match related stage.
CM 1 dribble with toes down for speed
CM 2 Accellerating with ball in front of you
Again here you want to demonstrate what you want learned and get on with it. Coach players in the flow of the session.
Be patient. It will not be perfect and may take 3-5 sessions to get it right. Allow for mistakes and praise small and large succeses.
Match Condition: get the kids into 4v4 with goals(multiple games at once) Here make 1-3 coaching moments, try not to bog down the session. OInly focus on your topic. Stay on topic & don't try to fix every problem you see.
At the end get the players together and within 30 seconds restate the coaching point of the workout and send them off.

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Re:Coaching the Youth Player

Posted by STLCoach - 31 Mar 2009 03:48

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Last evening I watched 2 u9 or 8 teams train. The coaches were trying to teach marking to the girls. What happened was they yelled "mark up" and the 4 little darlings ran and placed themselves in front of their counterpart at the top of the 18 yd line.
The players unfortunately did not touch a ball for 15 minutes. The keeper started to sit down and play in the dirt since she was not involved, and switched off from the session.
The next activity was shooting on goal from a line. no defending, just a break away on the keeper. The girls were all encouraged to "go faster". The keeper, who now was up and engaged, was told not to come out and make save because it was not allowing for shots from the shooters.
Lets help out here.

The idea of marking is abstract, at best, for U10 and under. Instead of showing the kids how to mark up on command from the coach, introduce them to the idea of defending the situation(here it appeared to be goalkick)

Get a bunch of balls, have you goalkeeper kick them out like a goal kick. At the top of the penalty area place a forward for the opposing team ad one of your back on the team of the goalkeeper, a 1v1 situation. Have the player on the keepers team stand in front of the opposing foward and facilitate in geting the ball up field to a small goal 15 yds away. If the forward steal the kick she can go score.
you can even let the forward take a free kick on the goal to precede the goal kick out.
Coaching points; 1. goalkicks 2. defending in front of players. 3 getting ball up field. 4. forwards getting balls back and 1v1 to goal. 5. goalkeeping.
We can then progress to 2 goals, 45 yds apart, 2 goal keeprs, and 3v3 (then 4v4) on the field. Field width the size of the penalty area. ***If you have extra players have them off to the side working on shooting or ball skills with another coach.*** Keep with you coaching points, but let the kids play more than you stop and talk.
If you work n this game with your players I promise you will be more successful than discussing it with them. Plus, we are staying with the idea of more play than not. Lastly, all the activities of the session are cohesive in topic.

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